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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 001725

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR P, EUR/WE, EUR/RPM, EUR/RUS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/04/2012

TAGS: [IT](#) [PREL](#) [RS](#) [NATO](#)

SUBJECT: BERLUSCONI SEEKS SUPPORT FOR BUSH-PUTIN MEETING IN ROME

REF: A. ROME 1206

[B](#). ROME 721

CLASSIFIED BY: POLITICAL MC THOMAS COUNTRYMAN REASON: 1.5 (B) AND (D).

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[1](#). (C) AMBASSADOR SEMBLER ACCOMPANIED CODEL YOUNG TO AN APRIL 4 MEETING WITH PM BERLUSCONI, JUST HOURS AFTER THE PM RETURNED FROM HIS MEETING HELP IN BUILDING RUSSIAN PUBLIC OPINION TO SUPPORT NATO ENLARGEMENT, AS WELL AS HELP WITH THE "NATO AT 20" CONCEPT. PRESIDENT BUSH NEEDS TO U

[2](#). (C) MAKING HIS REQUEST MORE SPECIFIC, BERLUSCONI SAID THAT PUTIN HAD PHONED PRESIDENT BUSH, WITH BERLUSCONI IN THE ROOM, TO URGE THAT NEGOTIATION THE PM ASKED THE AMBASSADOR TO SUPPORT THIS REQUEST WITH THE WHITE HOUSE.

[3](#). (C) IN AN APRIL 5 DISCUSSION WITH POL-MC, BERLUSCONI'S DIPLOMATIC ADVISER, ANTONIO CASTELLANETA, EXPANDED ON THE REASONS FOR THE PM'S REQUEST. PUTIN HAD SAID IN SOCHI THAT IT WAS NOT POLITICALLY PRACTICABLE WOULD SOLVE THIS PROBLEM FOR HIM. ACCORDING TO CASTELLANETA, BERLUSCONI BELIEVED THAT HIS VISIT THIS WEEK WAS THE MOST IMPORTANT ITALIAN-RUSSIAN

[4](#). (C) COMMENT AND ACTION REQUEST: WE CANNOT BE CERTAIN WHETHER A SEPARATE BUSH-PUTIN MEETING IN ROME IS MORE IMPORTANT FOR PUTIN OR FOR BERLUSCONI. EMBASSY IS AWARE THAT THE DEPUTIES HAD DISCUSSED AND NOT SUPPORTED THE ITALIAN PROPOSAL FOR A SEPARATE NATO-RUSSIA SUMMIT PRIOR TO PRAGUE SUMMIT. WE WOULD APPRECIATE WASHINGTON GUIDANCE ON HOW WE SHOULD RESPOND TO PM BERLUSCONI'S REQUESTS. SEMBLER

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